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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: March 12, 1953

SUBJECT: Guatemalan Situation

PARTICIPANTS: Colonel Oscar Morales Lopez, Former Military Attaché in Washington now in Rio de Janeiro
ARA - Mr. Cabot
MID - Mr. Fisher

COPIES TO: ARA - Mr. Cabot
American Embassy, Guatemala (Informally)
ARA
DRA
ARA Board

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Colonel Morales said he called with two purposes in mind; first, to pay his respects as an old acquaintance of Mr. Cabot and second, to convey to Mr. Cabot a message entrusted to him last November by the Foreign Minister of Guatemala, Raul Osegueda. According to Colonel Morales the Foreign Minister wished the Department to know of his concern over relations with the United States and of his desire to visit Washington to "straighten things out". Mr. Cabot thanked Colonel Morales and said he hoped that it would not cut across the Foreign Minister's plans, but that he himself was planning to visit the Caribbean and Central American area in April and expected he might be in Guatemala toward the end of the month. Mr. Cabot said if the Foreign Minister and the President wished to receive him he would be delighted to discuss matters with them. In so far as "straightening things out" is concerned, Mr. Cabot said, the difficulty seems to be the Guatemalan Government's unawareness of the danger of communism. He said that in fact the administration seemed to be friendly toward, and even allied with, communist leaders in Guatemala.

Colonel Morales said that he has long been unhappy over the communist tag which has been attached to his country, and that he has told President Arbenz frankly that something must be done about it. He said that President Arbenz' attitude is that the communists in Guatemala are few, are well known, are easily controllable, and constitute no international problem.

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problem. Colonel Morales quoted President Arbenz as saying he would do something about the communists if somebody would prove to him that they constitute a menace.

Mr. Cabot replied that there is no question of proof where avowed communists and pro-communists occupy positions of importance in the government, which he understood is the case in Guatemala. As for communists being a menace, he said, they are dangerously subversive to any government not completely controlled by them and that this incontrovertible fact is the bitter lesson of experience. He added that communism is a terrible scourge for any country, and said that he knew whereof he spoke, having served in two Iron Curtain countries.

Colonel Morales assented, but said he still felt it is desirable for the problem to be discussed. Mr. Cabot again indicated his readiness to call upon the Foreign Minister and the President if they wish to receive him during his proposed visit to Guatemala next month.

ARA:MLD:JWFisher:mem